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STATE FOR S/CT, NEA/ARP, NEA/RA, DS/NEA/IP

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SUBJECT: ABU DHABI CROWN PRINCE REACHES OUT ON CT PLANNING

Classified by Ambassador Michele Sison, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. Senior advisors to Mohamed bin Zayed al Nahyan (MbZ), Abu Dhabi Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, met with Embassy representatives on two recent occasions to seek information related to USG capability and response to a terrorist incident in the UAE in general and to a hostage-rescue event specifically. Embassy participants underscored USG reliance on UAE first-responsiveness and USG willingness to provide formal training/assistance if requested. We have identified limitations inherent in UAE response capabilities, including concerns about interoperability between the emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. End Summary.

¶2. (C) On May 28 AmCit Jack McGuinness, senior military advisor to Mohammed bin Zayed (MbZ), and Australian Terry O'Farrel, Operations Officer for the UAE Special Operations Command, met with the Ambassador, RSO and DAO to seek information about Embassy offices/forces responsible for a U.S. response to a hostage rescue or other terrorist event in the UAE. McGuinness and O'Farrel explained that MbZ had asked them to poll several Embassies in this regard. They did not indicate that there was any specific reason behind the UAE's concern at this time.

¶3. (C) Embassy representatives responded that in all terrorist-related incidents, the USG would rely first and foremost on host nation authorities to respond appropriately to the event itself and to work with the Embassy in respect to the safety and security of any U.S. citizens involved. We also indicated that, should the UAE desire crisis management assistance, the USG would certainly try to be receptive to any formal request from the host nation including requests for training. During the meeting McGuinness and O'Farrel noted that Dubai in particular provides a target-rich environment for a terrorist event and that the Emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai may have a difficult time coordinating a response to the event, given the degree of independence exercised between the law enforcement and security entities of the two Emirates. The Ambassador suggested a follow-up discussion with the USLO and DATT offices, the RSO offices (here and Dubai), and other selected offices within the Embassy.

¶4. (C) On June 7 McGuinness returned to the Embassy and met with the Acting DCM (CONS), DAO, RSO/Abu Dhabi, USLO, ECON and RSO/Dubai. He advised that he had reported back to MbZ on his first round meetings with other Embassies. He said the UAEG was completely wrong in their blanket assumptions that Embassies would be able to respond immediately to terrorist incidents with assets or assistance from outside the UAE, given distances involved from Australia, the U.S., or Europe.

¶5. (C) From the discussion it appears that MbZ recognizes that Embassies expect the UAEG to fulfill their responsibility to act as first-responders. Because his office is currently the center of gravity within the UAE for coordinating a response and resolving any conflict within competing response entities, it appears that MbZ is pushing forward the development of a National Crisis and Emergency Management Center to help the UAE get a handle on who will have what responsibilities in a crisis, rather than relying solely on the

Sheikh's guidance and decision. Raytheon has been awarded a contract for this Center, with a 3-man executive team to drive the first phase of its development.

¶ 6. (C) Several Embassy representatives offered their perspective on UAE response capability and stressed the need for the UAE to figure out a way to decentralize its decision-making and give operational and tactical authority to those dealing directly with the crisis. We assume that this information will be passed back to MbZ to be considered as part of a new "doctrine" that the UAE (and specifically MbZ) will need to develop in order to meet their crisis management objectives.

Dubai and Interoperability Between Emirates

¶ 7. (C) Embassy participants and McGuinness agreed that Dubai is a target-rich environment for terrorism; it has been mentioned in several statements allegedly from Al Qaida. From our perspective, and perhaps from MbZ's, there is concern about interoperability and cooperation issues between the authorities of the two emirates.

McGuinness noted that the UAE chain of command very quickly goes to Abu Dhabi Crown Prince MbZ to make decisions in response to a crisis, including refereeing between competing governmental entities, if necessary. This may work in Abu Dhabi where the Crown Prince holds sway and in five of the other Emirates where Abu Dhabi can effectively influence decisions. However, the Crown Prince cannot make decisions about crisis response in Dubai, although ConGen Dubai believes it is likely that in any national-level crisis (such as the taking of official U.S. hostages) Dubai Ruler Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum (MbR) would coordinate any reaction with MbZ and federal senior officials.

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Dubai has its own force (Dubai police SWAT) for such contingencies and that force does not work with, or integrate into, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) or Special Operations Command (SOC) forces. Its chain of command feeds to the Ruler, MbR.

Dubai appears to be planning to manage a terrorist incident alone, independent of assistance from the central government. McGuinness concurred with that assessment and noted that the issue of interoperability/independence would have to be solved "between the two Michaels" (MbZ and MbR).

Hostage Situations

¶ 8. (C) From the two discussions, it appears that the Crown Prince's office may be particularly concerned about hostage scenarios, especially highly sensitive targets such as schools frequented by expatriates. McGuinness and O'Farrel see the need to do preparatory work and the value of security surveys, but are having difficulty getting this action underway, partially because the Special Operations Command is currently heavily engaged with training for and deployments to Afghanistan and does not have the personnel available to conduct the surveys. McGuinness said that "MbZ is looking for smart ideas" for approaches. When asked why they were particularly concerned about this now, he simply said "intelligence information" without further elaboration and mentioned Al Qaeda statements about unIslamic activities in Dubai.

USG Training

¶ 9. (C) Embassy representatives spoke at length about the various kinds of ATA and other training offered in the past and USG willingness to try to provide whatever the UAE might put to good use. Post's RSO advised McGuinness of a recently-accepted July DS/ATA training and its potential applicability to current concern about security measures related to soft targets.

¶ 10. (C) Comment: We will remain in touch with MbZ's office for further discussion as well as with the Raytheon contractors for the

National Crisis and Emergency Centers and keep the Department appraised accordingly. End Comment.

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